

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action dated February 2, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 69-80, 84-100, and 103 and objected to claims 81-83, 101, 102, 104, and 105. However, the Examiner also indicated that claims 81-83, 101, 102, 104, and 105 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By this response, the Applicants hereby amend claims 1, 40, 69, 94, cancel claims 102 and 104, and add new claims 106, 107, and 108. These amendments and new claims do not add any new matter. Specifically, the Applicants hereby amend independent claims 69 and 94 to incorporate the allowable dependent claims 102 and 104, respectively. Similarly, as agreed during the telephonic interview summarized below, the Applicants hereby amend independent claims 1 and 40 to recite the allowable subject matter set forth in dependent claims 102 and 104, respectively. In addition, the Applicants hereby add new independent claims 106, 107, and 108, which recite the subject matter of allowable claims 81, 101, and 105 rewritten in independent form, respectively. As a result of these amendments, all of the independent claims now recite allowable subject matter, thereby rendering all outstanding rejections moot. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Interview Summary

On March 21, 2007, the Applicants' representative, Tait R. Swanson (Reg. No. 48, 226) initiated a telephonic interview with the Examiner to discuss the allowable subject matter and possible amendments to place the withdrawn claims in condition for allowance. During this interview, the parties agreed to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 102 into independent claim 1, thereby placing claim 1 and its dependent claims into condition for allowance. The parties also agreed to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 104 into independent claim 40 along with the recitation of the substrate and the porous layer, thereby placing claim 40 and its dependent claims into condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 69-72, 79, 80, 84, 86, 88, 93-96, 99, 100, and 103 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Hori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,494,179, hereinafter designated as “Hori”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. However, in view of the foregoing amendments, the independent claims all recite allowable subject matter. As a result, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the foregoing rejection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

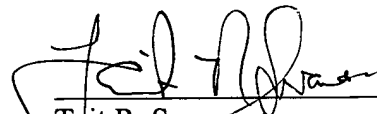
Claims 73, 76 and 87 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hori. Claims 74, 75, 77 and 78 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hori and further in view of Iwasaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,278,231, hereinafter designated as “Iwasaki”). Hori was further combined with Takai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,911,767, hereinafter designated as “Takai”) to reject claims 89, 91 and 92. Claim 90 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hori and further in view of Choi et. al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,504,292, hereinafter designated as “Choi”). Hori was further combined with Applicant’s admitted prior art (AAPA) to reject claims 97 and 98. The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. However, in view of the foregoing amendments, the independent claims all recite allowable subject matter. As a result, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the foregoing rejections.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 30, 2007



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